

BOOK REVIEWS

Noteworthy: New and Not-So-New

From 1884 to 1899 Theodor Pease Russell (TPR) wrote a weekly column of memoirs about pioneer Missouri for the Ironton, Missouri *Iron County Register*. James F. Keefe and Lynn Morrow have collected nineteen of these, adding maps, annotations, and genealogical and bibliographic information. An introduction by Robert Flanders provides background on Missouri history and culture, from the immigration and settlement wave that brought the Russell family from Connecticut to wilderness Missouri in 1838. The stories chosen for *A Connecticut Yankee in the Frontier Ozarks: The Writings of Theodor Pease Russell* were written to entertain and educate, and they are still successful at both. They are neither oral tales nor literary compositions, but the creations of a man who challenged the divisions between orality and literacy by taking part in reading performances, storytelling, and written stories, allowing the styles of each to intermingle. Don't expect grand theory, just solid scholarship and a good read (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1988. Pp. xii + 362 includes preface, introduction, photographs, bibliography and index. \$28.00 cloth).

"Is sex dirty?" someone once asked Woody Allen. "Only when it's done right," he answered. Richard S. Randall's *Freedom and Taboo: Pornography and the Politics of a Self Divided* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. Pp. 340 includes index. \$32.50 cloth, \$15.00 paper) comes to a more complex, but otherwise similar, conclusion. He points out the "mutually supportive relationship between pornography and censorship" (2). Both, he says, are inevitable because our long childhoods produce a human psychic structure that is necessarily and blissfully guilt-ridden about the sex act. Social taboos are the product of our collective, eroticized "demand and felt need for control" (x). This analysis of individual and collective attraction-repulsions is psychoanalytic in both its presumptions

(for example, the claim to universality, and catch-22 reasoning like the familiar "denial-equals-repression-equals-proof") and in its assumptions (that, for example, the primary function of human intelligence and imagination is the imposition of order), and those who have problems with these aspects of psychoanalytic theory will be engaged in a near-constant internal debate with the author. But since Randall's argument is also both sophisticated and intelligent, the dissenting reader may enjoy reading this book more than those who find Randall's argument merely sound.

And about vampires: Columbia University Press is distributing *Dracula: Essays on the Life and Times of Vlad Tepes*, a volume of essays written by Rumanian scholars of Vlad the Impaler and edited by Kurt W. Treptow. (1991, "East European Monographs" no. CCCXXIII. Pp. 336 includes introduction, maps, illustrations, appendices. \$36.00 cloth). The original "Dracula" (literally, "son of Dracul") was a prince during the fifteenth century Turkish occupation of Rumania. Both controversial and baffling even in his own time, he has alternately been painted as a national and Christian champion, and as a tyrant bloodthirsty enough to become the model vampire. This collection includes historical, cultural, and political background as well as analyses of Dracula in folk and literary traditions. The appendices include letters, genealogies, Ottoman documents, detailed chronologies and bibliographies, and maps. I cannot imagine wanting to know more about Dracula than is included in this rich, interesting book.

Omnigraphics has published several facsimile editions of older books which may be of interest to folklore scholars. Though at least two of these are fairly easy to find (one in original in used book stores and the other in paperback reprint), the Omnigraphics versions are (simply but handsomely) hard-bound on acid-free paper and will stand some use. We've received copies of: 1) *Quilts: Their Story and How To Make Them*, an important classic by Marie D. Webster, originally published 1915; 2) the third revised edition (1925) of *Jewish Ceremonial Situations and Customs*, by William Rosenau; 3) *Heraldry and Floral Forms as Used in Decoration*, written and illustrated by Herbert Cole in 1922; and 4) Henry Reed Stues's 1869 book, *Bundling: Its Origin, Progress and Decline in America*. Original covers are not reproduced, but all original illustrations and indices are.

"The Friends of Photography," a not-for-profit organization based in San Francisco, has sent us a copy of photographer Michael Kenna's *Nightwalk* (1988, Pp. 59. \$17.95 paper). We don't know why they sent it here, but it's a collection of high-texture photographs taken at night, delicious eye candy, and a very convincing argument for the significance of cultural geography. For more information about the book or organization (which has a journal and other activities as well as monies), write to 101 Embarcadero, Suite 210, San Francisco, California 94105.

A simplified version of the Arabic tale complex *Kalila wa Dimna* is available as a reader for intermediate students of Arabic. The text includes a brief introduction by author Munther A. Younes and a glossary after each story. (*Tales From Kalila wa Dimna: An Arabic Reader*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. Pp. x + 158, introduction, notes. \$16.00 cloth). Though the 46 tales included in the text are abridged and "denested" from the eighth-century literary version, this simplification has its own tradition—*Kalila wa Dimna* tales have continued to circulate in many versions, both literary and oral. Companion audio cassettes are available to those who want to polish listening comprehension.

It seems that the folks at August House really do listen to scholarly grumbles about their folklore series. *Italian-American Folklore* (Frances M. Malpezzi and William M. Clements. Little Rock, 1992. Pp. 272. \$24.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper), which arrived in their last shipment to us, is still written for a very general audience and still homogenizes "the folk" somewhat. But it also includes quite a bit of specific information about fieldwork situations and variations both between and within Italian American communities. This book is a definite improvement over several others we've seen in the series, and that deserves a mention. We also test-drove several of August House's "American Storytelling" audio cassettes. Of these, only Donald Davis's stories were complex enough or wry enough to sustain most adult interest, but kids seemed genuinely inspired by the others. (For example, *Listening for the Crack of Dawn*. Little Rock, 1992. 120 minutes. \$16.95. The "Storytelling Press Audio" series was not included in those we compared, nor were Roberta Simpson's tapes). Now you know.

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Michele Lamont and Marcel Fournier, eds. **Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. Pp. xv + 325, notes, index. \$50.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

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Cultivating Differences, an anthology edited by Michele Lamont and Marcel Fournier, presents analyses of many of the same issues that have fascinated postmodernist literary theorists since the so-called death of structuralism. One big difference between the sixteen contributors to